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Subject: Rough transcript - 9 Feb Ministerial presser on Truckers Convoy

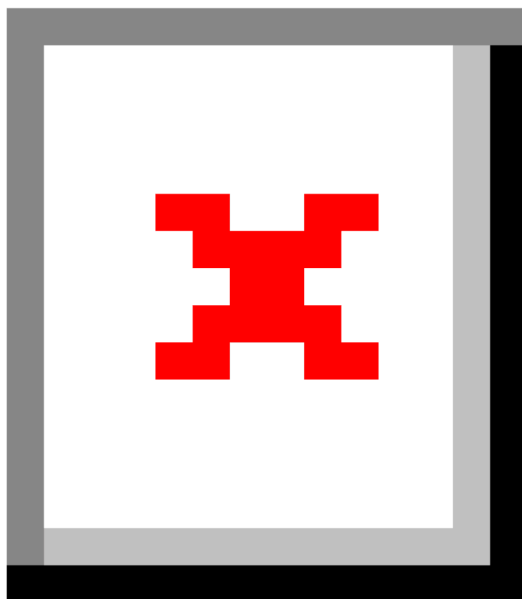
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Subject: Tr: Ministers on anti-mandate protests_Blair, Alghabra, Mendicino (CTV-N, CBC-NN 1h10)

Tr: Ministers on anti-mandate protests_Blair, Alghabra, Mendicino (CTV-N, CBC-NN 1h10)



2022-02-09

Time / Heure: 1h10

Network / Chaîne: CTV-N, CBC-NN

With / Avec: Bill Blair, Omar Alghabra, Marco Mendicino

Topics Discussed / Sujets Discutés: anti-mandate protests

Bill Blair: ...wWho live and work in the area of the parliament when this protest is taking place have been significantly impacted. They have been subject to acts of thuddery, and crimes have been committed for all the people impacted by this, I also want to provide reassurance to Canadians

throughout this protest. The government of Canada has continued to do its job. Parliament is meeting. Parliamentarians are in the house and participating and the government of Canada continues to do its important work to serve all Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast.

Last night, minister Mendicino and I hosted the second meeting of the trilateral table with mayor Watson and his officials. The prime minister also spoke with mayor Watson yesterday afternoon to reaffirm our government's support for the city of Ottawa to ensure that we provide all of the help that they need from us in order to deal with the protests taking place within their city. We are working very closely with our municipal partners to ensure that the Ottawa police service has the resources that they need to enforce the law, to restore public order, and to bring this unlawful protest to an end. I'd also like to take the opportunity to recognize the Ontario provincial police service who has been providing assistance to Ottawa for the last two weeks alongside the RCMP, but I also need to emphasize that we need political leadership -- in order to work together to resolve this crisis. This occupation requires all of us to come together to use all of the authorities that are available at our disposal. Many of the legislation and authorities to deal with this unlawful protest reside in the provincial highway traffic act and municipal bylaws and, of course, it is the province of Ontario, solicitor general who have ultimate responsibility for the policing and maintenance of public safety in the province. Invitations have been extended to minister Jones and her officials and we are hopeful and confident they will be joining us at our next meeting.

We all have a job to do. We all have a responsibility to work as partners in public safety and to address the crisis that is not only at the heart of our nation's capital but also starting to impact very significantly essential supply lines and jobs right across the country. As we monitor the situation in Ottawa, we are also seized with what's happening at the ambassador bridge in Windsor, in Coutts, Alberta and in other places across the country.

Truckers who have kept our shelves stocked throughout the pandemic are currently being blocked or slowed down while carrying essential goods into our country and from our factories to their markets. These truckers who have been heroes throughout the pandemic are being unlawfully stopped and impeded from doing their jobs and let us be clear, the impact of these unlawful blockades goes well beyond those borders. Goods that are not getting to factories so that, for example, our automotive industry is able to produce the goods and services that support our economy, the men and women who work in those factories are facing significant impacts on their jobs, their ability to do their work but also to support their families. And so while we all work collectively hard together to manage the effect of these blockades, let's keep in mind the innocent Canadians who are being hurt by this. And as long as those blockades continue to slow down goods and

services, and I'm sure my colleagues will speak more of this, all Canadians will be hurt by the actions of these few.

These blockades are unlawful. The law needs to be upheld. I very much respect the efforts of our law enforcement officials to bring about a peaceful resolution to this but I would urge all of those who are engaging in this unlawful activity, think about the people you are truly hurting, and stop. Open those roads, open those bridges, let people go back to their lives. Let me be very clear. The ambassador bridge is a vital artery to our country. And it's a vital artery in our supply chain. It's central to the functioning of our economy and to serving all Canadians. The blockade must end before further damage occurs. These demonstrations are in fact very harmful. I want to assure all Canadians that our government will continue to work with and support the police of jurisdiction in managing and quickly ending these blockades.

And as we've said all week, throughout the past two years and for that matter throughout every aspect of this pandemic, this has been extremely difficult for all Canadians. We understand your frustration. We share your hope that we will quickly come through this pandemic and return to a life normalcy where we can all enjoy our lives, go about our business, and engage in things that make life in Canada so important. No one wanted this pandemic to happen. But by coming together, by being decent to one another, by respecting each other, by following the public health safety guidelines put in place, we've helped all Canadians get through this. It's the Canadian way. I'd like to thank you all very much for your time and your patience. I'll now pass things over to my colleague minister alghabra.

Omar Alghabra: Thank you very much, minister Blair. And hello, everyone. I'd like to begin by acknowledging that I am speaking to you today from the traditional territory of the algonquin and anishinabe people. The current ial blockades across the country have significantly economic implications for our supply chain and our jobs.

Omar Alghabra [Speaking French]: [no interpretation]

Omar Alghabra: In the last two days, I've met with the Canadian trucking alliance, the Canadian vehicle manufacturers association, the automotive parts manufacturers association, and the retail council of Canada. And they're all telling me the same thing: The situation must stop because the consequences are enormous.

Omar Alghabra [Speaking French]: This has to stop.

Omar Alghabra: The current illegal blockade at the ambassador bridge border crossing prevents truckers from being able to bring essential goods to Canadians. 4,000 trucks a day normally enter Canada over this bridge have been stopped. The ambassador bridge is the busiest crossing in Canada, handling over \$350 million a day in merchandise trade. The auto sector brings in millions of goods every day over the bridge as part of its just-in-time delivery to parts in auto plants in southern Ontario. But it's not just

auto jobs and other manufacturing jobs that are at risk. This blockade is forcing some factories to send workers home. It's interfering with Canadians' ability to earn a living and access essential goods, include food from grocery stores. A significant amount of central Canada's produce and other fresh foods crosses at that point of entry. And to be honest, I find it ironic that the same people who were trying to sell Canadians fake stories about empty shelves are now the ones causing these shelves to go empty. This is an illegal economic blockade against the people of Ontario and against all Canadians. Please, to all those that are at those illegal blockades, go home.

Omar Alhabra [Speaking French]: Go home.

Omar Alhabra: I'm also asking those blocking the border in Coutts, Alberta, to go home. We are reaching out to the government of Ontario, as our two governments need to work together to end this illegal economic blockade against the people of Ontario. I will also meet with my counterparts in Alberta, minister -- this afternoon to continue our collaboration. The federal government has always been there. But we also need the cooperation of all levels of government and here I call on the government of Ontario to join us in the hard work of securing an end to these illegal blockades in several Ontario cities and to apply the law. Thank you, everyone. Merci. And now I'll pass on the mic to my colleague minister Mendicino.

Marco Mendicino: Merci, Omar. I too would like to acknowledge I'm joining you virtually from the territories of the algonquin people. I want to thank everyone for joining us today as well as my colleagues for expanding a little bit on the on-going situation here in ottawa, in Alberta at the Coutts official port of entry, and more recently now at the ambassador bridge in Windsor. I want to also take a moment to thank all the members of the law enforcement who are responding to the convoys and in particular the members of the RCMP who have been adding resources where appropriate and as much as possible to support local law enforcement with the primary responsibility of enforcing public safety. Our message today is very simple. That the federal government will continue to provide reinforcements, tangible, concrete, reinforcements through the RCMP wherever we can. We are doing so in Alberta and very recently we have approved a request at the recommendation of the RCMP commissioner to allow for additional reinforcements to be provided at Coutts.

We are also providing concrete, tangible assistance to the ottawa police service and we will be expanding on that in a few moments. And we are also responding to other situations as they emerge. We have started to see a restoration of life that looks somewhat more normal in ottawa and that has been done again with the cooperation of law enforcement. We're seeing more tickets issued, on-going criminal investigations, we're seeing structures come down. It does look quieter and calmer, but even as we have made some headway in ottawa, we've seen an illegal blockade emerge in Windsor

at the ambassador bridge. I want to be clear: Those participating in the convoy are hurting Canadians. They pose serious dangers for the economy and they are breaking the law. And no one is above the law. Whatever the frustrations, disagreements, any of those who are participating in the convoy may have with the government's strategy, not only the federal government but the provincial government and other governments may have with the strategy out of the pandemic, none of that justifies breaking the law. None of that justifies continuing to participate in a convoy which is hurting Canadians and these are not Alberta abstract principles.

We're talking about farmers and ranchers in Alberta who can't sell their meat in the U.S. because they no longer have the ability to go through the Coutts border crossing. We're talking about retail auto makers in Ottawa who have been unable to go back to work and run the risk of being able to receive a paycheck because many of the shops and businesses have had to remain closed at the Rideau Centre and elsewhere in Ottawa just so that they can stay safe. You shouldn't have to choose between being safe and having a job. And that is precisely the dilemma and the ultimatum that the convoy is putting to ordinary Canadians. It's workers and factories across southern Ontario that are forcing the slowed production and now we're hearing reports that some may even need to shut down this afternoon because the parts they need are stuck on the other side of the ambassador bridge.

I've spoken with many community leaders in Windsor, including Mayor Dilkens, including our local MPs Brian Masse and Eric Kuzmarek, all of whom have said with a single voice those who have gotten into their trucks and decided to park them at the exit of the ambassador bridge need to go home now. Go home peacefully. Go home out of respect for those hardworking families in Windsor who are just trying to put food on the table, who are just trying to get by. Who are just trying to make ends meet, to the convoy, you are not helping. You are hurting them. You are hurting Canadians. And you are not above the law.

Marco Mendicino [Speaking French]: [no translation]

Marco Mendicino: Yesterday we had a very productive conversation again with Mayor Watson as well as Chief Slosky. We are working through the details of their operational plan. I want to assure those living in Ottawa that the RCMP continue to coordinate very closely with the ops as well as the OPP who have a critically-important role to play to ensure that we have all the resources that are required and, again, I just want to underline that we will continue to provide that support as much as we can and where needed. In Alberta, the situation at the Coutts border crossing has again deteriorated. In addition to the blockades at Highway 4 at Coutts and Milk River, blockaders have moved closer to the border crossing itself forcing it to temporarily close. The CBSA is redirecting traffic to other crossings where additional resources have been added to deal with the increased traffic. This

blockade of Alberta's most important link to the U.S. has already cost the province's economy hundreds of millions of dollars.

The North American agriculture sector is highly integrated with everything from feed to meat to live animals crossing the border in both directions and most of it is at Coutts. Coutts sweet grass crossing is the only one between Winnipeg and Vancouver with the capacity to handle many of these goods which support thousands of jobs across western Canada. The blockade must end there too. As I first announced, the RCMP will be sending additional officers at the request of the government of Alberta under section 9.2 of the police service act, the province can request extra officers from the RCMP, and I'm pleased to report that I had a conversation with premier Kenney where we were able to communicate that that support would be there for local law enforcement.

Marco Mendicino [Speaking French]: [no translation]

Marco Mendicino: Ontario's critical manufacturing sector relies on trade between our two countries. We have already heard from auto manufacturers and others that plants could close as early as this afternoon. As you heard ministers Blair, Alghabra along with other colleagues of ours in the cabinet continue to engage with our counterparts and stakeholders across the province. We will continue to do everything that we can to provide the resources that are necessary for law enforcement to do their job. We remain very concerned with the situation at Ambassador Bridge, but we are engaging with all of our partners provincially. I will point out that I had a call with premier Ford earlier today where he committed, and I was grateful for the commitment to have my counterpart minister Sylvia Jones participate in the [unclear] on a daily basis, so that everyone can be on the same page so that we can be united and coordinated in our response, that we can continue to do the business of government, so that we can see the most quick, fast, expeditious, and peaceful resolution to this convoy. Thank you. Merci.

[Questions from Media]

Reporter: Yes, good afternoon. And thanks. I guess all three ministers, you have pointed to a lack of presence by the province of Ontario at the trilateral table, and I'm wondering, could you clarify what is it that you expect them to be doing that they are not and why is it their responsibility to protect the national capital in particular?

Marco Mendicino: The first thing I want to say is that I had a good call with premier Ford. He reached out and we're thankful for that. And I think we both expressed a serious concern about the on-going blockades and the need to support law enforcement as much as possible so that they have the tools and the resources to see the very fast and peaceful resolution to the convoy in Ottawa and in Windsor. I know that, over the course of a number of days, that there has been back and forth from both of our teams. And certainly I'm encouraged by the fact that minister Jones will be participating in the tripartite which both minister Blair and I have been engaging with the city

with. I think the central message is that we all need to be united, we all need to be coordinated, we all need to be sure that we are providing the resources and the tools that are needed and as local law enforcement here in Ottawa and in Windsor, request additional supports, certainly the OPP who have provided support here in Ottawa and may be called to do the same in other parts of the province, it's just critically important that we are in synch on that and I was certainly encouraged by the call that I had with Premier Ford and we look forward to more on-going collaboration and I turn it over to Minister Blair and Alghabra if they have anything else to add.

[break in coverage]

Bill Blair: They're certainly entitled to their opinion. Respectfully I believe they're sadly misinformed on the science and they get their evidence from the internet rather than from our health professionals, but we continue to do everything that is necessary, but I think we've also demonstrated throughout this pandemic that we monitor the on-going situation. We've responded vigorously to the waves as they have occurred, including the omicron wave that impacted this country, and that we have been prepared to modify, the measures that we impose in the context of the circumstances that we're dealing with but we have remained firm in our belief that vaccination is important for all Canadians and we're going to continue to make sure they're available and to encourage people to do that. And unfortunately, the impact of the actions of these protestors clearly is unlawful but I think it needs to be recognized the harm that they are doing, the harm that they are doing to individual citizens through their frankly many criminal acts, acts of thuggery and obnoxiousness they inflicted on people of Ottawa, and now as a result of their actions, their unlawful actions to block our highways leading into our ports of entry with the United States, they're essentially putting their foot on the throat of all Canadians. They're cutting off essential supply lines and goods and services and as my colleague and friend Minister Alghabra said, only a few weeks ago, you know, these people were suggesting that grocery store shelves were empty. They were attempting to mislead. And now they're actually attempting to achieve what they threatened Canadians with. And so it can't be allowed to persist. We are all hoping for a peaceful resolution to these protests but they need to end.

Reporter: Good afternoon, thanks for taking our questions. Ministers, Canadians are watching this. We are now at two border blockades. And twelve days of blockades in Ottawa and the perception is that the government and law enforcement have no control. That Canada can be taken over by protests and apparently it just is allowed to happen. So how do you respond to that perception? I'll send that to Mr. Mendicino, maybe one minister can answer to save time.

Marco Mendicino: Thanks for the question. My response is very simple. The business of government is continuing. We're in the chamber, we're

introducing legislation, we're passing laws, we're focused on getting ourselves out of the pandemic. And for those that are trying to obstruct the work of the business of the government whether provincially, federally, municipally, they're not going to succeed. We have all of the resolve to continue to the job done on behalf of Canadians. They are here in a manner that is not consistent with the law. And that is why we have turned to law enforcement as a way of trying to disengage the convoy peacefully, quickly, and in a way that is respectful to Canadians. It is unfortunate that, in some I think misguided effort, they believe they're advancing a good cause. All they're doing right now is hurting Canadians. They're hurting Canadians by erecting blockades at our ports of entry, be it at Coutts or at the ambassador bridge in Windsor and these are people who are -- these are truckers, these truckers, 90% are vaccinated so they've done their part and they're trying to move the supply chains that are not only keeping people employed but are putting food and bread on the table. And so my response to you is we'll continue to do the business of government.

Reporter: But minister, the people are not concerned about the business of government. They're concerned about their business, they're concerned about their daily lives. I don't think it's much comfort to people in sarnia or Windsor right now that government is continuing, they see lawlessness, you've described it as lawlessness, and yet it appears that all governments at all levels and all police agencies are completely unable to stop it. It is not quick. It's been almost two weeks in Coutts, it's been almost two weeks in ottawa and now the most important bridge and border crossing also is taken over and so, again, can you please address, is government in control or law enforcement in control and when will people see that?

Marco Mendicino: And the answer is yes. And we are going to continue to provide the resources to law enforcement to do their job, and we have seen progress in ottawa. We've seen more enforcement. We've seen tickets issued. We've seen criminal investigations started. We are seeing things become quieter and calmer and that is an encouraging sign. And the ambassador bridge, we are fully engaged to provide the resources that we can to local law enforcement which means making sure they've got the people, the money and the supports they need. We trust our law enforcement to do their job. We know they're working very hard, and there will be a restoration of those lanes and those supply chains. They're also redirecting traffic other ports of entry which is I think another positive sign of our ability to keep supply chains moving. It's not just about doing the business of government, it's making that the economy turns, that the people are able to do their jobs so they can earn their wages and put food and bread on the table and that's what we'll be singularly resolved to do.

Reporter: I'll ask it in English for everybody but Mr. Mendicino, if you would answer in French. About the ambassador bridge specific, how long before you ask for an injunction to clear the road?

Marco Mendicino [Speaking French]: Christian, there is already everything in the law for the police force to do the job on the ground. The border services is working with the police service for the situation at the ambassador bridge. If there is another option, for example, an injunction, that's a choice that might be explored by the police service independent of the government. We're working in close collaboration with the province and even the city of Windsor to find solutions, concrete solutions, to reduce the situation at the ambassador bridge.

Marco Mendicino: The existing authorities already are in place in the law so that law enforcement can do the job. What I mean by that is that at their independent discretion, they're able to engage those who are participating in the convoy, can certainly take law enforcement action, as we have seen in Ottawa, as we have seen in Coutts, to try to dissipate the convoy there. Should they choose to explore other options including an injunction, that is at their independent discretion. And certainly the courts will have the capacity to render a decision as they see fit, but from where we sit, at the federal level of government, our job is not to take those decisions operationally. Our job is to make sure that the CBSA and the local police have all of the resources that they need in conjunction with the province and as Minister Blair pointed out, the responsibility for local police in Ontario is both local, municipal authorities as well as the province.

Reporter [Speaking French]: Now I'd like to talk about the funding coming from foreign countries to the demonstrations to Ottawa, to the ambassador bridge. How concerned are you and what can you do?

Marco Mendicino [Speaking French]: I think this is a concern that everyone shares. I'm a bit reassured that focus on an issue that touches -- that deals with foreign interference. It's a very, very important issue and I'm very concerned, like everyone.

Reporter: Hi there, Minister. The city of Ottawa declared a state of emergency on the weekend and asked for 1800 police officers. I believe what you're telling us this morning is that only today has the provincial government agreed to sit down with you to discuss that request. Do you feel like all layers of government are treating this as the emergency that the city of Ottawa sees it as?

Marco Mendicino: My first response to that is that certainly from a level of federal government, that we have been there to provide support to the Ottawa police service and, again, I want to thank the RCMP for stepping up with reinforcements since day one and as I said earlier today as a result of some very fruitful conversations that we had with Mayor Watson yesterday and further discussions with the RCMP, more reinforcements are coming and that is something that should encourage everyone. Beyond that, I would say that I know that the OPP has also been lending important resources on the ground to the Ottawa police service so at the operational level, I think the lines of communication have been very strong. And yes, following a

discussion that we had with the province today and my conversation with premier Ford, I know that my colleague minister leblanc also had a conversation with premier Ford, we're certainly reassured that there will be political representation from the province on the tripartite by the federal government to put focus and synchronicity in our response to providing support that law enforcement needs to bring about the fast and peaceful resolution of the convoy.

I guess just as a follow-up then, the blockade has been going on in ottawa for 13 days. It's been going on for almost as long at Coutts in Alberta. Are you concerned that the inaction, the inability to resolve these blockades, encouraged people to set up a blockade at the ambassador bridge which is now cutting off a quarter of Canada's trade to the United States?

Marco Mendicino: Well, I want to be clear that I think we all share the concern that the blockades have put pressure on Canadians, are hurting Canadians, are hurting the economy. And that's why we need to be very agile in providing the tools and the resources that law enforcement need to address them. I will say that at Coutts, thus far, the impact to the economy and supply chains there has been very much minimized thanks to the quick response of both the CBSA as well as the RCMP who serves the police of jurisdiction through the police services agreement that we have with Alberta and again here too I would just assure everyone that the RCMP have provided reinforcements to Alberta which is a tangible contribution from the level of the federal government through the RCMP and the ambassador bridge, you know, look, we are singularly focused on the impacts. You've heard from ministers Blair and Alghabra that we need to put a full corps press. That's why we need the province of Ontario at the table to show unity across all levels of government to show we are on the same page, in synch, and providing all the resources that local law enforcement needs to do their job. But there can be no doubt about the fact that we need to see a fast and peaceful resolution to the convoy because it is hurting Canadians and that's what we're going to remain singularly focused on.

Reporter [Speaking French]: Mr. Mendicino, you repeated earlier that there's more reinforcements coming? What does that mean exactly because the mayor of Ottawa is asking for 800 agents, is that realistic, and if not, can you give me an idea of how many additional officers might be offered for support?

Marco Mendicino [Speaking French]: Good question. And that's exactly the discussion that we are advancing with the city of Ottawa. That once again, we have to respect jurisdiction for the police services, all the details you're asking us is at the discretion of the police services. Between the ops and the RCMP and the OPP and the details about the next addition of resources has been finalized and verified and finally I'd like to say we would add more officers and the exact number, we will keep right now to protect the sensitivity of the operations on the ground.

Reporter [Speaking French]: You say it is being finalized. When can we expect an answer to this specific question, today, tomorrow? Sure, it's just an estimate, but what do you expect?

Marco Mendicino [Speaking French]: I hope today, the RCMP, I know the RCMP is in discussions right now with the ops, ottawa police service, and it's a situation with a lot of agencies so I hope for an answer as soon as possible.

Reporter: I want to make sure I understand properly. No member of government of Ontario has been participating at the tripartite up till today, correct?

Marco Mendicino: We have every expectation that they will be at the tripartite today. We had it set up the day before yesterday, and in the meantime, minister Blair and I have been in contact with minister Jones but minister Blair may wish to add.

Bill Blair: Yeah, just very briefly, no, they have not been at the table for the first two meetings, they have indications from them today they will be joining us at the next meeting.

Reporter: When you say no one is above the law, I think this is certainly not the impression that people are getting from these blockades happening in three different locations right now so how can you say that nobody is above the law when it looks like actually they are?

Bill Blair: I think we've all got something to say here but if I may, I believe the rule of law has to be upheld. It is the responsibility of the police to do that, and we have, will ensure they have the resources they need to uphold the law and keep the peace, and we've seen many instances of law breaking here and we will not direct the police, but we certainly have every expectation that they'll do their job.

Marco Mendicino: And I would just add to that that there is an abundance of evidence that the law is being upheld. You have seen charges laid. You have seen tickets issued. You have seen the announcement that there are on-going criminal investigations. And as a result of that, you are, I think, seeing something that is a more peaceful and calmer normal state of affairs here in Ottawa, it's certainly a lot quieter than it was this past weekend. There's been progress that has been made, that is in large thanks to the good work of local law enforcement. So what we mean when we say that no one is above the law is that, yes, as an individual, if you choose to go out and break the law, you can do that. But there will be consequences. And those consequences are a necessity of living in a society that is based on a certain set of rules by which we all agree to follow. And so the process of that law enforcement has seen, I think, us making headway here in Ottawa and I'm optimistic that we will make headway in the other areas where the blockades have emerged.

Reporter: Thank you for taking our questions. What concerns do you have about who is funding this movement? We're seeing it's getting a lot of

support from far right American influencers, some people say the crowd funding is unprecedented, can anything be done to address this, especially when public safety is at risk?

Marco Mendicino: Well, I'll say that I think we're all concerned about the very rapid number of contributions that were made and the sheer size of the contributions the go-fund-me platform. I'm relieved as I think we all are that go-fund-me put a stop to the distribution of those funds to the convoy. Clearly, they had looked carefully and with meticulous detail at who was contributing and I think also examined the very important question about what those funds could be used to do. And if they felt as though, and clearly they must have, otherwise they would not have issued a statement, they felt those funds could be used to advance the cause of the convoy and certainly the statements that were made by the leaders of the convoy, that could undermine public safety or otherwise led towards some activity that could undermine our security, that they should put a stop to it, so they did that. I will also say that the public safety committee of the house of commons will be studying this issue. They will undertake that work independently of the government. But I think it's a very timely and urgent issue that does require thought and attention and also perhaps some additional action on the part of all of us to be sure that we can't see any kind of contributions come in to undermine our public safety or our national security.

Bill Blair: If I may just add, I think we're all concerned about the lack of transparency and therefore accountability to the source of these funds and how they're being used.

Reporter: And -- where parliament hill is, whether law enforcement should be pointed over to the federal government so the feds can have more control over the parliament hill precinct to avoid situations like this in the future.

Marco Mendicino: I think that's a really good question, Stephanie, and as I've said previously, I think following the resolution of this convoy, we need to take away a number of lessons as to, you know, the way in which there was a response to the convoy, including the way that Wellington street fits into the parliamentary precinct. Right now, our immediate concern is to be sure that law enforcement has all the support they need to disengage the convoy as quickly and as peacefully as possible and the point of the update today is just really reassure everyone that from the level of federal government that reinforcements are being provided in Coutts, in Ottawa, and that we are very focused on the serious situation in ambassador and that there is a full court press here with the tripartite that minister Blair and I are convening and minister alghabra is also working on with counterparts so we can respond as quickly as possible.

Reporter: Hi, thanks very much. I hear you guys talk about this, minister Blair, you say this is like putting a foot on the throat of Canadians. We're

talking about hundreds and millions of dollars to the Alberta economy, hundreds of millions of dollars of goods per day over the ambassador bridge. It sounds like a serious I think emergency for the nation the way you guys are describing it. So why haven't you -- the federal government is still playing a supporting role in the response here, at what point do you guys shift that and try and play a leading role, is there anything you can do, the emergencies act, is that being considered? Because the way you describe it sounds very, very serious and grave.

Bill Blair: Alex, if I may, first of all, let me say I believe it is very serious and potentially grave. The cutting off of the essential movement of goods and services across the ambassador bridge is already having a huge impact on Canadian industry and Canadian workers. People were sent home early from one of our Windsor factories yesterday, as a direct result of the criminal actions of the people engaged in the blockade. We also want to be very clear. All three levels of government are responsible [missing interpretation].

Reporter: My understanding is that there is a new logistics camp in Ottawa being set up on federal land, south of the downtown. I'm wondering if you guys know about that. Did the federal government approve that? Does that have a green light from you guys? What do you think of what's going on there? Are there plans to go in and prevent that from happening? Obviously there's concerns of a reestablishment of a support network for the blockade.

Marco Mendicino: I saw a few social media tweets about it. I would just say that any structures that aren't lawfully there, we have a flag with law enforcement and there has been progress made in taking a number of those structures down. Particularly at Confederation Park. We will address those situations as they come up. Our position today is to demonstrate the clarity with which we will continue to provide support, the tools, the resources that police need to enforce and uphold the law so Canadians can get their lives back. We'll continue to work on that day and night, and I know my colleagues, Minister Blair and I will be having another call later on today. We'll keep at it.

[end of press conference]

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